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ABSTRACT

This report is concerned with the climate of opinion prevailing among Illinois farm, rural non-farm, and urban residents in 1978 and the implications of these opinions for agriculture and rural communities in the 1980's. A sample of more than 8,000 adult Illinois residents were questioned about land use, government regulatory programs, and local community issues. The results of the survey suggested that the traditional distinctions between farmers and urbanites have become blurred. Findings also indicated that personal and local interests affect views on issues, but the contrasts are not sharp, which suggests that the arena for decision making is increasingly the larger society. (Author/MK)

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Farming in an Urban Environment

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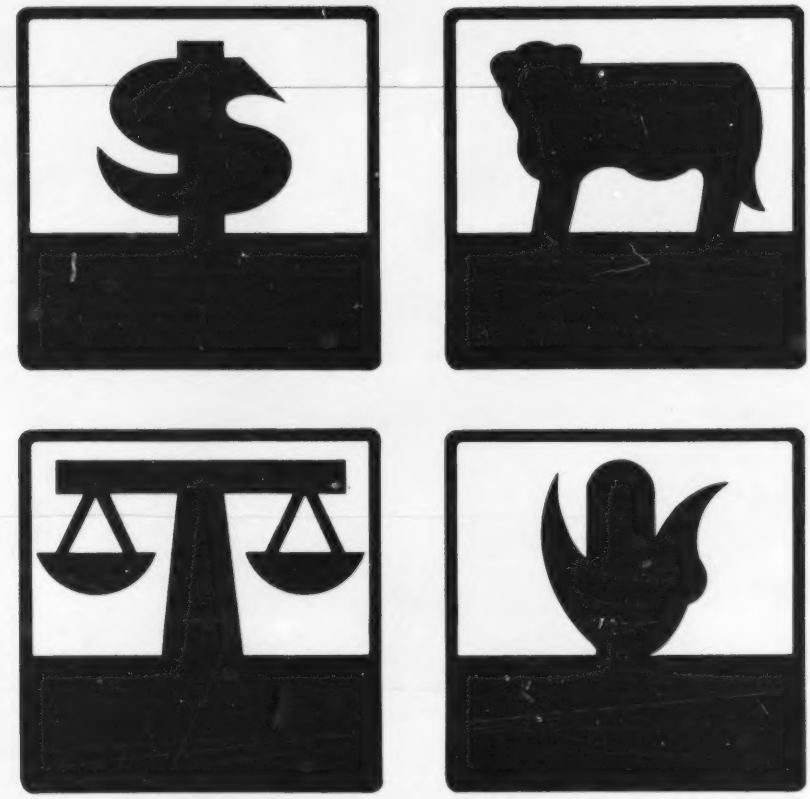

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Farming in an Urban Environment

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Agriculture in Illinois: Alternative Futures for the 1980s

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Publications in this series:

AERR 165 Future National Policies and Illinois Agriculture
AERR 166 International Trade and Illinois Agriculture
AERR 167 Farming in an Urban Environment
AERR 168 Changes in the Farmland Base
AERR 169 Illinois Farm Property Taxes
AERR 170 Illinois Crop Production
AERR 171 Livestock Production and Marketing
AERR 172 The Dairy Industry
AERR 173 Fertilizer and Pesticide Use by Illinois Agriculture
AERR 174 Farm Income, Expense, and Asset Structure
AERR 175 Market Structure in Illinois: Food Manufacturing and Distribution Sectors
AERR 176 Summary Report

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ABSTRACT *This report is concerned with the climate of opinion prevailing among Illinois's farm, rural nonfarm, and urban residents in the late 1970s and the implications of these opinions for agriculture and the rural community in the 1980s. A representative sample of more than 8,000 Illinois adults was asked questions on land use, regulatory programs, and local community issues. The results suggest that traditional contrasts between farmer and urbanite have become blurred. Personal and local interests affect views on issues, but the contrasts are not sharp, suggesting that the arena for decision-making is increasingly the larger society.*

KEYWORDS **opinion, survey, Illinois residents, land use, rural community, government regulation, farming, urban environment**

FOREWORD

This report is one of a series that describes the current structure and trends in the Illinois agricultural economy and provides projections of potential future developments. The series is the product of research carried out in the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with the support of the Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station. Approximately twenty staff members cooperated in this analysis.

The participants and their reports deal with a range of specialized interest areas. The project took advantage of the participants' specialized knowledge, while coordinating their efforts within a common framework of research goals and methods.

Most of the reports deal with quantitative projections for 1985 and 1990. When compared with the description of current Illinois agriculture, these projections suggest possible changes throughout the Eighties. Quantitative projections are supplemented by the authors' analyses of the forces underlying the trends and the resulting projections. This particular report is concerned with a different kind of projection. It uses data from a survey of Illinois residents' opinions to treat questions concerning the future of the rural community.

Users of the information in this set of reports should draw their own conclusions about the relative likelihood of the various combinations of assumptions and projections. Hopefully the information will aid decision-makers in Illinois agriculture, as they evaluate changing conditions, plan for adapting to those changes, or perhaps even attempt to influence the nature of the changes which do occur.

FARMING IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Frederick C. Fliegel, J.C. van Es,
Rabel J. Burdge, and Harvey J. Schweitzer

INTRODUCTION

If the farmers who originally settled on the rich lands of Illinois ever conducted their affairs as completely independent decision-makers, their descendants obviously no longer do so, nor will they return to such independence in the foreseeable future. Production and marketing decisions are intricately enmeshed in larger economic, social, and political networks. The immediate concerns of the farmer are not always the same as those of his urban neighbor, and the criss-crossing of interests and actions may well extend around the world. For that reason we have chosen to present here some data on the opinions of Illinois residents, urban and rural, farm and nonfarm. The concerns of Illinois residents as a whole, and their opinions on a number of current issues, may provide some insight into some matters which will affect Illinois agriculture in the 1980s and beyond. It is our purpose to contrast farm residents' opinions and attitudes with those of people living in nonfarm settings, especially the dominant urban majority. We will attempt to discern how similarities and differences in points of view will affect agriculture and the rural community in the years ahead.

The Survey Data reported here were obtained from a representative sample of 8,268 adult Illinois residents who filled out questionnaires mailed to them in early 1978. This cross-sectional study of Illinois residents' points of view is one of the most comprehensive ever undertaken. It presents an unusual opportunity to analyze people's responses to a variety of questions put to them about local and statewide concerns and issues. The results were tabulated for purposes of this report in terms of where the respondents reside to facilitate comparison and contrast between the points of view of men and women living on Illinois farms and engaged in farming with those of rural nonfarm, small-town, and metropolitan area residents. These residential classifications are used in reporting most of the material which follows. The fact that only some 4 percent of the sample are actively involved in farming simply documents the fact that the agricultural industry of the state functions in an urban environment. Views held by the population at large can affect the industry. And, conversely, the fact that over 80 percent of the state's land is farmland makes it clear that farmers' decisions can affect the urban majority. It is precisely the intertwining of interests and views that we want to explore in this report.

Forecasting into the 1980s on the basis of a cross-section of opinions held in 1978 is probably not possible. We are aware of the fact that people's attitudes and opinions change as new information on an issue becomes available and as events change the mix of issues with which people are concerned. Survey questions were asked about issues of more than momentary interest, however, issues which well

may have to be resolved at some point in the future. To the extent that these issues have some implications for the future of Illinois agriculture, current attitudes and opinions can perhaps help show more clearly what lies ahead. We should also make it clear, however, that the survey data reported here were intended to serve a variety of purposes, not just to explore implications for agriculture. We are attempting to take advantage of the existence of the statewide survey to shed some light on the questions raised by projecting production trends into the future.

Local, State, and National Issues were the focus of most of the questions asked in the 1978 survey. We have selected from it those items pertinent to the agricultural industry and organized these materials under three major headings. First, our report deals with land use questions, which are central to the future of agriculture. Here we explore people's views on changes in use patterns to the extent that they reveal preferences which tend to shift land out of production into other uses. Second, we report the responses to a series of questions on taxation and other public policy issues in a section on the farmer and governmental action. And, third, we have grouped together responses to a number of questions which relate to the future of the rural community. The movement of people out of agriculture in recent decades has brought to light many questions about the continuing viability of the rural community, and we were able to address some of these with available survey data.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents. Well over half, some 61 percent, of the 8,268 Illinois adults responding to the survey were living in cities large enough to be classified as metropolitan areas by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Another 23 percent of the respondents were living in towns and cities of less than metropolitan status. In census terms, an incorporated place with at least 2,500 population is classified as "urban." We have followed census classification in this regard, and thus respondents living in places of at least 2,500, but no more than 50,000 population, are described as living in "smaller towns and cities" to distinguish them from residents of metropolitan areas (50,000 population and over). Altogether, then, 84 percent of our respondents are technically urban residents, but, in a number of the data presentations which follow, the metropolitan versus smaller town or city distinction is of interest. The dominance of urban residents is, of course, characteristic of the population of Illinois at present, and the sample was designed to reflect that. We stress the dominance here because our later comparisons of rural and urban opinions, attitudes, and so on can only be interpreted with that dominance in mind. Illinois is an urban state, and positions taken by the urban majority affect the state as a whole very directly.

The more rural segment of the sample was divided into two categories—open country-nonfarm and farm residents. We deviated from the standard Bureau of the Census definition of the "farm" segment of our sample because we wanted to restrict that category to adult respondents with a direct stake in production agriculture. The census of population defines anyone living on a farm, whether engaged in farming or not, as a farm resident. We classified as farm residents only respondents whose occupations (or whose spouses' occupations) were given as "farmer." People who indicated they lived on a farm but listed other than agriculture-related occupations

were classified, for purposes of this study, as open country-nonfarm. As a result, 13 percent of the entire sample is classified as open country-nonfarm, and just under 4 percent as farm residents.

The farm resident category contains only 290 respondents in contrast to the over 5,000 respondents in the metropolitan category. The 290 farm respondents are fairly evenly spread over the state, however, and their representativeness of the farming population can be defended. The 290 farm respondents are fifty years old, on the average, and so somewhat older than the respondents in the other residential categories, who are in their early to middle forties. In most respects, however, the personal characteristics of respondents in the several residential categories are quite similar. The typical respondent is married, has completed high school, and reports a total 1977 family income of from $15,000 to $20,000. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were female, 45 percent, male.

This brief description of respondent characteristics is presented to document the general position that the sample of 8,268 Illinois adults represents the adult population of the state (see Burdge, et al., 1978). The sample is heavily urban, and that urban segment is dominated, as is the state, by residents of the Chicago metropolitan area. The other residential categories contain proportionally fewer cases, and those cases reflect the geographical spread of the population. The characteristics of respondents are not greatly different across residential categories, but there is, of course, substantial diversity within each category. There are wealthy respondents and poor, young and old, and the mix substantially represents the diversity in the state's population.

It is our intent to present a very general picture—rather than detailed numbers—of similarities and differences in opinions and perceptions of problems found when respondents are classified according to where they live. It is our purpose, broadly speaking, to look at rural and urban differences in order to assess what any such similarities and differences can tell us about the future of agriculture and the future of the rural community. The gross characteristics given for the survey respondents should be kept in mind when interpreting the survey results which follow.

ATTITUDES ABOUT LAND USE

I am most upset about good farmland being used for homes and factories when there is much nonproductive land which could be used.

Land should be put to its most profitable use. Raising food sure isn't it.

Residents of Illinois, comments from the survey questionnaire.

Another report in this series discusses the likely future use of Illinois land. The point is made there that the next fifteen years will probably not see quite the same types and degrees of change in land use as the state has experienced in the recent past. But there still will be competition for land to be used for agriculture, recreation, mining, and transportation facilities such as roads and airports.

At all levels of government, there has been great concern for guiding land use so as to protect the public interest. Any form of land use regulation affects individual ability to dispose of land;

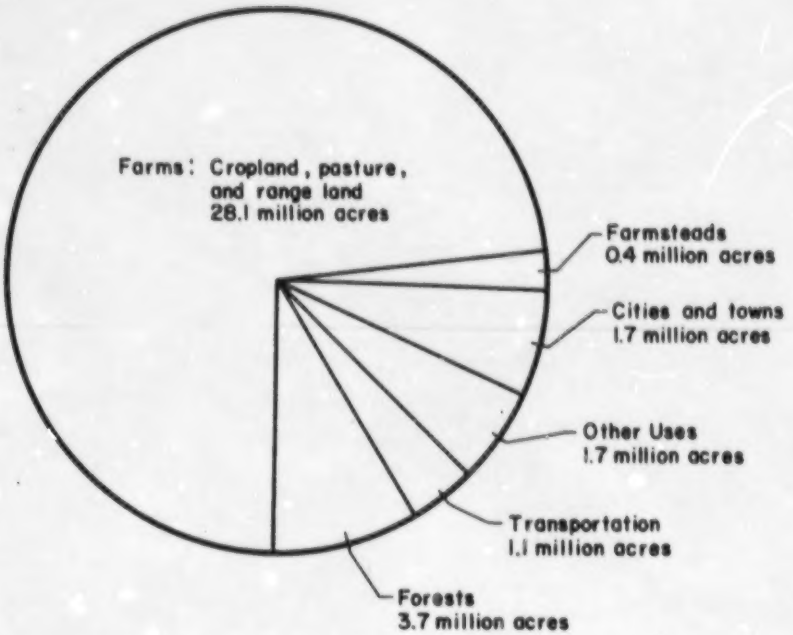
Farms: Cropland, pasture, and range land 28.1 million acres
Farmsteads 0.4 million acres
Cities and towns 1.7 million acres
Other Uses 1.7 million acres
Transportation 1.1 million acres
Forests 3.7 million acres

Figure 1. Major land uses in Illinois

therefore land use and land use regulation have been of great interest in Illinois, as they have been elsewhere.

Since farmers collectively control by far the largest share of productive Illinois land (see Figure 1), they have a vital stake in the allocation of Illinois land. Competition for farmland with other usages typically has a very localized impact. Building a shopping center on farmland or acquiring right-of-way for a highway tends to affect directly only a relatively small number of farmers. At the same time, around the larger metropolitan areas a continuous and, at times, conspicuous conversion of farmland to urban and residential usage can be found. Nevertheless, when asked if the conversion of farmland to other uses was a problem in their community, 43 percent of the metropolitan residents indicated that it was not while only 26 percent of the farmers indicated no problem. The lesser perception of a problem in metropolitan areas can be attributed partially to the likelihood that many urban dwellers did not define the periphery of their cities as part of "their community." But even when compared to the residents of small towns and rural areas, farmers express much greater concern about the conversion of farmland to other uses. While neither the past nor the future indicates that loss of their farm through land use conversion is a real threat to most farmers, in effect farmers expressed a great deal of insecurity about the future use of farmland, a sentiment not widely held by nonfarmers.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their preferences for future land use. They were asked to keep in mind that land is a finite quantity so that, in effect, the questions deal with reallocating the use of land. Table 1 shows the percentages of respondents indicating which types of land use they would like to see increased.

The most striking observation from Table 1 is the regularity with which farmers take the extreme low position of wanting to see fewer changes in land use than do other resident groups. Even in the case of more land to be used for industry, farmers are tied for the lowest position with the metropolitan residents. Since most allocations of land for other purposes would, in effect, deal with the reallocation of farmland, these figures tend to conform with the earlier reported findings that farmers perceive changes in land use as threatening their interests.

Few respondents in general—and even fewer *farm* respondents—support allocating more land to transportation, urban use, industry, or energy generation. There is relatively strong support for allocating more land to forest and agricultural use, although again support is least strong among the farmers. The divergent interests of metropolitan residents and farmers are most strongly focused on the diversion of land for recreational usage in parks, scenic areas, and public beaches. While 51 percent of the metropolitan residents want to see more land allocated to that purpose, only 15 percent of the farm respondents do. Recreational usage ranks second in priority among metropolitan residents and those of small cities, third among open country nonfarm residents, but fifth among the farm respondents. It is not really surprising to see that farmers place a low priority on open spaces for recreational purposes, but given the general trend in society toward more time and attention to leisure pursuits, it is likely that the pressures for the further development of recreational areas in Illinois will intensify. Furthermore, higher gasoline prices may force more Illinois residents to look for recreational opportunities closer to their residences. While the impact of such pressure to establish recreational areas will be felt most strongly in areas with scenic amenities and good accessibility, it is likely that the agricultural community will find itself regularly at odds with the other residents of the state on the issue of using land for recreational purposes. These issues have already become a strong focus of concern in many of the more densely populated industrial

TABLE 1

FUTURE USES OF ILLINOIS LAND

Respondents who want *more* land allocated to the following usages:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Farms—land for growing food	40	38	38	37
Transportation—land for roads and airports	14	9	6	4
Recreation—land for public beaches, parks and scenic areas	51	43	32	15
Cities—land for growth of towns and cities	16	17	12	11
Forests—land for trees and wildlife	55	55	53	42
Industry—land for factories and warehouses	17	20	19	17
Energy—land for strip mines, power plants, and cooling lakes	21	20	18	16

countries such as Japan and those in Western Europe, where agricultural land is increasingly evaluated not only in terms of its productive capacity but in terms of its simultaneous potential for recreational use.

THE FARMER AND GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

Instead of full parity for farmers, they should find more markets for their products. Everyone should quit depending on the government.

I would like to see the inheritance tax on farms and equipment eliminated so as to encourage more young farmers to stay on the farms.

Residents of Illinois, comments from the survey questionnaire

American democracy in the ideal Jeffersonian form was based on the vision of a country made up of many equal citizens with a real stake in the well-being of society. Such a system was epitomized in the existence of a large class of small, individual landholders acting independently. Because of this tradition, there has always been an important place for a self-reliant agricultural sector within the American political fabric. But, as our society has grown in size and complexity, government has become increasingly more extensive and the role of a self-reliant citizenry has increasingly been challenged. Yet it is often argued by farmers and nonfarmers alike that the agricultural sector represents a strong adherence to the traditional values of self-reliance and independence from government. If this is the case, without judging whether it is "good" or "bad," it can be argued that farmers represent an attitudinal minority in the political arena. In this section we will analyze some data which deal with the role of government both as an intervening force in our lives and as a collector and distributor of taxes. We will identify the attitudes farmers may have with regard to the functioning of government and compare those with the attitudes of other population groups.

The Role of Government Regulation

In Table 2 a number of items are included which deal with various aspects of government regulation. All items have some relevance to farming, but, from the first to the last, these items relate increasingly more directly to agriculture. In all cases, the farmer responses show either the lowest or the highest support, thus providing some evidence that farmers' attitudes may be different from those of other residential groups. In all but one case the number of respondents answering affirmatively ranges from high to low, from the most metropolitan residents to the farmers, or vice versa.

However, more careful analysis of the data indicates that the farmer respondents do not appear to have a distinctly different attitude toward government regulation. In four of the seven items, more than 70 percent of the farmer respondents supported government regulation. In two items directly related to the ownership of agricultural land the farmer respondents advocate government regulation more strongly than do the other classes of respondent.

Farmers support the need for governmental regulation of transportation and dumping of hazardous material in the state. Their support for such regulation is only slightly lower than that of the other respondents. While many of the hazardous wastes are urban and industrial in origin, both their transportation and disposal are

likely to affect farm people. Farmers indicate that they share a general concern for the safety of the handling of dangerous wastes.

The stricter control of food additives is supported by 70 percent of the farm respondents, but the support is at least 10 percent less than that found in other population groups. The more direct involvement of the farmers in the food industry may explain their greater reluctance toward acceptance of governmental regulation in this area. While the item refers to food processing, it is clear that many regulations in the food processing industry can have repercussions for farmers. For example, it is believed by many that a sudden ban on nitrites in the meat processing industry would have a detrimental impact on pork producers. Given that much of the debate on food additives is quite controversial and involves many unanswered scientific questions, the support among farmers for regulation can be judged to be quite high.

In the matter of on-the-farm use of chemicals and fertilizers, we find that less than one-fifth of the farmer respondents favor such regulation. This can be seen as clear evidence of the reluctance of farmers to accept such regulations. It is difficult to determine to what extent the issue of food becoming more expensive was a significant consideration for the farmers, as it presumably was for the other respondents. Farmers have repeatedly expressed their concern that restrictions on fertilizer and chemical usage may make their products no longer competitive on a national or international market. While farmer support is small, the other respondents also indicate reservations about restricting fertilizer and chemical usage on the farm if it were to result in increased food prices.

Controlling community growth through zoning regulations is not strongly supported in any respondent category, with the farm respondents expressing the lowest level of support. In the section on

TABLE 2

GOVERNMENT REGULATION

	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percentage responding yes)			
Should Illinois have stronger laws to control the transportation and dumping of hazardous chemicals and atomic waste materials in the state?	92	90	90	88
Should there be stricter controls on the use of chemical food additives and preservatives?	86	80	82	70
Should farmers be required to use less chemical fertilizers and pesticides even if this would make food more expensive?	49	37	35	17
Should zoning regulations be used to limit community growth?	51	36	31	29
Should laws be passed to prevent the purchase of farms and farmland in Illinois by persons outside the U.S.?	72	78	81	87
Should big corporations be restricted from buying farms and farmland in Illinois?	56	67	74	85

land use we showed that there is little support for allocating more land to urban growth. We also indicated that farmers showed great concern for the conversion of farm land to other uses. It is therefore somewhat paradoxical that so little support is found among the respondents for zoning regulations. It may be that more of an educational effort is needed to show the public the positive elements of zoning laws. However, it is equally possible that the respondents have in effect decided on the basis of their experience with zoning laws that they are not an effective way to control urban growth and that different approaches need to be tried.

Finally, the last two items in Table 2 indicate an extremely strong concern among the farmer respondents about land ownership by foreigners and large corporations. While the farmers are by far the most pronounced, all respondents indicate strong support for preventing land ownership by foreigners, and there is strong support for restricting ownership by large corporations as well, although in the large urban centers this support is down to 56 percent of the respondents.

In Illinois, farms have become larger and larger during the last several generations. The increased size of farms and increased land prices make it difficult for individuals to enter farming. At the same time it is thought foreign investors and large corporations may enter the agricultural scene in significant numbers. Such entry by foreign investors and large corporations would alter irreversibly the nature of the agricultural enterprise and the rural communities. The majority of respondents indicate that they favor preventing these changes in land tenure and ownership from occurring.

On balance the data appear to indicate that farmers' attitudes toward government regulations tend to be somewhat different from those of other residential categories, especially the metropolitan residents. But the data also indicate that farmers do not have an attitude of categorical denial of governmental regulation. On the contrary, their attitude appears to be very much in tune with the modern political world: Governmental regulation is supported or opposed largely depending on how one is to be affected by the specific regulation.

Support for Governmental Programs

In the preceding section we interpreted the data on attitudes toward government regulation as indicating that farmers generally relate to the political system in ways one would expect of farm groups with shared interests. Farmers certainly don't display a dogmatic attitude about the role of government. This interpretation can be further tested against the data in Table 3. All respondents were asked if they were willing to have tax money spent on a large number of different programs. Out of a total of fourteen programs the farmers are least interested, of all categories of residents, in spending tax money for twelve programs. The farmers are most interested of all groups in spending tax money for two programs. These latter programs are both directly related to agricultural programs, although a third agricultural item, support for agricultural research, was not as strongly supported by farmers as by other groups. The support for the agricultural programs does reflect the different interests consumers and farmers have in the agricultural marketplace. Farmers are supportive of programs likely to increase their income; consumers are more concerned with the price of food.

Farmers do appear to be slightly less likely to see a role for government programs than the respondents in the other residence categories, especially those in the metropolitan areas. It is interesting to note that the willingness to support government programs with tax dollars most often declines systematically when one moves from the metropolitan residents to the farm residents. Apparently the complexities of urban life are related to an expressed need to see a larger role for the government. This gives some support to the notion that farmers are less supportive of governmental activities. However in eight out of fourteen cases more than half of the farmers support the programs, and for only three programs do we find that less than one-third of the farmers are willing to see funds spent on these programs. Farmers do not make a clearly categorical statement of refusal to support government programs, but their support is not as strong as in the other population categories.

Looking more closely at the programs included in Table 3 we find, as already noted, that farmers express strong support for certain programs aimed at improving their enterprises. Both the development of foreign markets and programs to control soil erosion receive strong farmer support. Agricultural research programs are not as strongly supported by farmers as by others, although still more than half of the farmers support such expenditures. It is well to keep in mind that at the time of the research, after the harvest of 1977, most farmers were confronted with abundant supplies and low prices. This

TABLE 3

EXPENDITURE OF TAX MONIES ON SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Programs on which tax money might be spent	Residential category: Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percentage approving expenditure)			
Development of foreign markets for Illinois farm products	49	52	56	85
Child immunization programs	88	87	89	82
Counseling for parents who abuse their children	85	85	82	79
Legal assistance for the elderly	90	88	87	78
Nursing care in the homes of older people rather than in hospitals or nursing homes	81	78	78	76
Homemaker services for older and disabled people	87	84	83	75
Programs to help farmers control soil erosion	71	63	65	75
Attraction of new industry to the state	70	71	71	65
Agricultural research to make farms more productive	67	59	58	58
Help with heating bills for low income people	60	61	63	47
Daycare centers for low income working parents	71	68	64	46
Public housing for low income families	54	57	56	42
Driver improvement programs for drivers whose licenses have been suspended or revoked	35	30	31	29
Assistance to private schools and colleges	42	32	30	27
Abortions for women who cannot afford private care	42	33	30	21

may account for some of the lukewarm interest in supporting agricultural research, which is generally identified with increased outputs. It is also possible that farmers are not strongly convinced that government-sponsored research has been very much to their benefit, and possibly they perceive the research role as more appropriate to private industry.

If we assume that in the next decade Illinois agriculture will be characterized by a relatively "stagnant" agricultural economy with slow growth and relatively slumping farm income, it is probably reasonable to argue that agricultural research is not a high priority item. If, on the other hand, we are willing to assume a growing agricultural situation characterized by strong prices, agricultural research will need to be vigorously pursued if Illinois is to maintain its position on the world market. The somewhat "soft" support among farmers for agricultural research deserves to be further explored and better understood.

Imposing Taxes

Government services and taxes go hand in hand and the concern about high taxes is, of course, widespread. All respondents were asked which sources of revenue they would be willing to resort to if additional revenue were needed. These possible sources of income have all been discussed publicly in recent years. Not surprisingly, there are few popular taxes. Taking all respondents, we find that only four out of fourteen taxes were nominated by more than half of the respondents as likely candidates for sources of additional revenue. Two of these, on liquor and cigarettes, and on "gas guzzling" automobiles, can be considered taxes on luxuries, if not on vices. The other two, the corporate income tax and the corporate franchise tax, are undoubtedly popular because they do not tax individuals, and by far the largest majority of the respondents would never be taxed directly through such taxes.

At the other exteme, the city income tax, the property tax, and the utility tax are the least favored sources for additional revenue. The highest level of endorsement of increasing these taxes is 12 percent, and the level of support goes down as low as 4 percent in the case of property taxes among farmers.

Table 4 shows a tendency for farmers and nonfarmers to support different sources of taxation. In six cases the farmers show the least support of all respondent categories for certain revenue sources, and in six cases the farmers show the most support. It is apparent that the farmers are very much guided by their perception of their self-interest in recommending which taxes are to be considered for increases; the nonfarmer respondents tend to do the same thing, of course.

Farmers are very heavily affected by the property tax and by inheritance taxes. Because of the nature of the family farm, inheritance taxes on land and equipment pose serious problems for many farm families upon the operator's death. The recent increases in land values, as well as in real estate taxes, have given farmers great concern. Property taxes are not only a cost which reduces farm income, but they also constitute a production cost, which could make it more difficult for farmers to compete in the marketplace. Understandably, therefore, farmers are very reluctant to increase such taxes. Sales tax and income tax, on the other hand, are relatively favorable to

farmers. The tax burden imposed by these taxes tends to be less than that of the inheritance tax or the property tax. Consequently, farmers are somewhat less opposed to increasing these taxes than the other categories of respondents.

In summary, the data reviewed here, which dealt with attitudes toward government regulation, spending tax dollars for various programs, and finding opportunities for collecting new revenues, indicate that farmers frequently respond somewhat differently than nonfarmer respondents. However this information should not be interpreted as evidence of a particular ideological leaning on the part of farmers. Most findings appear to be comfortably interpreted within the framework of farmers acting as self-interested participants in the political process. At times, of course, farmers find that their interests do not coincide with those of the majority of the nonfarming population. In general, however, the differences more often appear to be differences in degree of support or disapproval, rather than reflections of fundamentally opposing interests.

TABLE 4

INCREASES IN SPECIFIC TAXES TO SUPPLY NEEDED REVENUES

	Residential category			
Type of tax	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percentage approving increase)			
Cigarette and liquor tax	75	80	80	85
Corporate franchise tax	62	60	59	53
Tax on "gas guzzling" cars	56	56	54	53
Corporate income tax	62	63	59	52
Sales tax	21	26	26	37
State income tax	20	21	21	34
License plate tax	23	24	21	28
Coal severance tax	32	31	31	28
Motor vehicle registration tax	23	24	20	24
Gasoline tax	15	14	16	23
City or county income tax	10	12	12	12
Utility tax (gas, water, and electricity)	8	7	9	10
Inheritance tax	32	29	22	6
Property tax	9	7	7	4

THE RURAL COMMUNITY: ISSUES, NEEDS, AND ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE FUTURE

Farms and farming are very important in our future and should be encouraged and helped by all of us.

I despise the way the farmers are felt sorry for and all the breaks they are given.

Residents of Illinois, comments from the survey questionnaire.

Present-day commercial agriculture is probabiy less dependent on the institutions, goods, and services available in a particular locality than at any time in the past. The modern farmer can at least augment and may well bypass a local service effort to obtain what is needed for both farm and family. This is not to say that the rural community no longer has a role to play, but that contemporary means of transportation and communication plus a host of other factors serve to reduce the farmer's dependence on the immediate locality. The same loosening of ties of dependency applies to contemporary urban residents as well, of course. A service not available in city A can perhaps be obtained in city B and so on.

In this section we explore people's views on problems and issues in their own communities, whether rural or urban, from the general perspective that many of the concerns will be quite similar, regardless of place of residence. Some differences do emerge, as we will demonstrate below, and we will focus on those. Those issues and problems that do stand out as of particular importance to farmers and other rural residents may provide some insights into the current status of the rural community as the setting for the production process and as a place to live.

Background of Change

It can be argued that the rural community has been a topic of interest over the years precisely because it has changed and keeps changing. Much of that history is familiar, of course, but a brief summary may be useful in setting the stage for a discussion of contemporary views.

Limiting our review to the present century, a prominent place in community studies has to be given to the work of C. J. Galpin (1915). That work was based in southern Wisconsin and probably applies to many Illinois rural communities of the period. The main point which emerges from Galpin's work is that the rural community of the time was defined essentially by the distance a farmer could conveniently travel with horses and wagon in a day's time. In a very real sense, the constraints of available transportation technology bound people together into community groupings. Goods and services not available in that restricted space presumably had to be foregone. And conversely, of course, opportunities and incentives for the provisions of goods and services on a small-scale basis were plentiful throughout rural America.

From the 1920s on to about the 1950s it can be argued that changes in the technology of transportation played a role in major transformations of the rural community. If the limitations of horse transport had constricted networks of human relationships, the advent of motor vehicles facilitated the loosening of those bonds and permitted daily affairs to be carried out on a wider stage. Much more than the technological change was involved in altering the rural scene, of course, and far more than transport alone played a role. The emergence of cooperatives as an important force in marketing,

purchasing of production inputs, and, not least, rural electrification exerted powerful influences in shaping relationships between people in the geographic location of the networks of relationships which constitute the community. The increasing importance of cities in the general industrialization of the American economy and society must also be mentioned.

As we said at the outset, however, the story of recent change in rural communities is familiar and need not be detailed here. Broadly speaking, rural communities were transformed during the second quarter of this century by a process of amalgamation of smaller units into larger ones. Smaller businesses disappeared and large ones replaced them; small school systems were consolidated into larger ones; small neighborhoods lost their identity and were replaced by identification with the village and the town (see especially Kolb, 1959).

Changes in the rural community since about 1950 have been of a somewhat different order than those prior to that time. It could be argued that the process of reorganization and amalgamation has simply continued with social interactions being carried out on an even wider stage. The substantial transformation of the agricultural production process itself, however, has contributed enormously to the change process. Basically, the mechanization of agriculture and the even broader substitution of capital for human labor have effected a shift of people out of agriculture, substantially depopulating the countryside. Many rural institutions have ceased to exist as a function of that population shift. They have not merely merged into larger yet still local units, but they have disappeared. Vestiges of older forms still survive (see Salamon, 1978, for an Illinois example). But, by and large, out-migration from the farms to towns and cities has substantially altered the nature of rural communities.

The shift of people out of agriculture has largely, though not entirely, run its course at this point in time. Farm numbers in Illinois are expected to decline further, and average farm size is expected to increase for at least some time yet. The relative size of the farm population has decreased to the point, however, where further shifts out of agriculture can have only modest impact on the rural community (Beale, 1978). Another, and different, population shift phenomenon is probably of far greater relative importance to the rural community than any change in farm population at this point. Surburban sprawl has been with us for some time, but the out-migration of urban population to more remote rural areas started to be noticed in the early 1970s and can be expected to have a substantial impact on many rural communities (Zuiches and Brown, 1978).

A recent study (Sofranko and Williams, 1978) indicates that fully rural counties in Illinois have not been attracting urban migrants to the same extent as some other areas in the north central region of the United States—for example, the Missouri Ozarks—but the shift is taking place in Illinois as well as elsewhere. The effects on rural communities of what is being called the "new migration" are very difficult to assess because little research on the phenomenon has been done at this point. Nevertheless, it seems to be clear that the trend is and will continue to be widespread in rural America. Communities which have been losing population for decades are attracting new residents. And the important point is that the new residents are former urbanites, and they will inevitably alter the complexion of the rural communities where they settle. To the extent that earlier

depopulation has resulted in excess capacity for delivery of goods and services in many rural communities, some are now experiencing gains and can absorb those gains without great stress. The mix of people is changing, however; the very nature of the rural communities is shifting, and it is not clear toward what. One point is clear: The formerly strong linkage between the rural community and the farm segment of the rural population is changing. The farmer has long been shifting toward involvement in extra-local service and organizational networks. And the remaining local networks are increasingly oriented to the rural nonfarm population, including the metropolitan migrants who are seeking a new way of life in the countryside. Rural communities are surviving, but their purpose and nature seem to be changing.

This discussion was intended to describe an assortment of complex rural community changes which result in a weakening of ties of dependency between farm people and their local communities. The lines of distinction between that which is rural and that which is urban have been blurred. In the sections which follow, we will report how people, wherever they live, perceive problems and issues. In doing so we will attempt to focus on matters of possibly distinctive concern to farm and other rural people. Some perspective on the rural community of today and tomorrow will hopefully emerge.

Local Transportation and Protective Service Needs

All respondents in the statewide survey were asked a series of questions about local transportation needs, and several of these questions were slanted toward the distinctive needs of the rural and, more generally, the nonmetropolitan population. The questions were worded so as to determine whether the respondents felt that the items, listed in Table 5, represented no problem, a small problem, or a medium or serious problem, in their particular communities. Results, as shown in the table, represent the proportion of respondents in each residence category who indicated that the content of the

TABLE 5

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICE NEEDS

Respondents who say that, in *their communities,* there is a "medium" or "serious" problem involving the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Small town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Upkeep of local roads and streets	58	54	55	53
Safety of bridges on rural roads	24	36	45	53
Safety of railroad crossings	25	35	36	33
Bus and rail service to other cities	34	56	54	51
Police protection	34	27	38	37
Fire protection	17	11	20	16
Respondents who would support increase in state gasoline tax to pay for repairing rural roads and replacing old bridges.	20	21	25	34

particular question described a "medium" or "serious" problem in their communities. The balance of the respondents, apart from occasional failure to answer the question, marked the "no problem" or "small problem" categories; that percentage is not reported separately.

Several ideas about distinctively rural needs with respect to local transportation were invoked in phrasing questions for the survey. The matter of safety of bridges on rural roads is a fairly obvious example. Rural road systems in the state were almost all laid out generations ago. While many of the bridges have been replaced or repaired from time to time, the rapid acceleration of use of heavy machinery and larger trucks in recent decades has put a severe strain on bridges which were simply not designed for such loads. Furthermore, a particular bridge may be crucial for residents in a given area, but it is not uncommon for the number of users to have declined over the years as farms have been consolidated into larger units. It has become increasingly difficult, therefore, to generate public support for the provision of a service, such as bridge repair in this case, which increasingly stems from what might be called a semiprivate need.

Responses to the rural bridge question, shown in Table 5, clearly indicate that the need is acutely felt in rural areas with over half of the rural respondents indicating a medium or serious bridge safety problem in their communities. Minorities of urban residents also perceive bridge safety as a local problem, presumably in rapidly growing urban fringe areas where narrow bridges on rural roads present a traffic congestion problem.

Since the state's gasoline tax has been suggested as a revenue source for dealing with the problem of rural roads and bridges, a question was designed to determine support for an increase in that tax for such a purpose. Results, shown in the last row of Table 4, do show somewhat more support for that device in the rural areas where the need is greatest. By and large, however, the results indicate a strong lack of support statewide for an increase in the state gasoline tax to provide funds for rural road and bridge repair. Only one-fifth to one-third of the respondents in any residence category favor such a move, as shown in the table.

It can be assumed that public awareness of recent increases in motor fuel costs would contribute to lack of enthusiasm for a gasoline tax increase. In addition, the generally high concern for upkeep of local roads and streets in all residential categories, shown in the first row of Table 5, suggests that the somewhat distinctive transportation needs of rural residents may be counter-balanced by analogous needs in the more densely populated urban areas. Making assumptions, again, still another possibility is that the severe weather of the last several winters has increased the need for road and street maintenance in most areas of the state. Pothole repair has been much in the news in recent years, and it may well be that immediate needs for solving short-term problems will take precedence over concern for the more basic problems of the rural transportation infrastructure. In any case, our limited data indicate concern about local transportation needs, particularly among rural residents, but lack of support for the single ameliorative measure which was suggested.

We had also expected the safety of railroad crossings to be of greatest concern in rural areas, where unprotected crossings are the

norm. Responses to our question, shown in Table 5, do reflect somewhat higher problem awareness in nonmetropolitan areas but, generally speaking, most respondents regardless of residence do not regard the safety of railroad crossings as a major issue.

Still another question, this one on the adequacy of bus and rail service to "other cities," yielded the expected results. Metropolitan area residents were least likely to mention this as a problem area, as might be expected. Had the question been worded to focus more narrowly on rail service, and particularly the ever-present possibility of reducing rail service in less densely populated areas, we might have gained some insight into a question of considerable importance to commercial agriculture. As it stands, the response pattern to the broadly worded question on both bus and rail service would suggest a considerable commonality of interest among all nonmetropolitan residents.

Finally, we asked two questions about protective services. We had expected rural residents to be less likely to perceive needs for more police protection than metropolitan area residents, but that was not the case, as shown in Table 5. Popular conceptions of the big city as a dangerous place to the contrary, farm and open country-nonfarm residents are somewhat more likely to indicate that police protection represents a medium or serious problem in their communities than are city dwellers. The farmers' heavy capital investments in equipment and in costly production inputs in the fields themselves have given rise to problems of vandalism and theft, which, though they do not necessarily attract attention of the national news media, are very real at the local level. Responses by place of residence on both police and fire protection problems show a substantial and somewhat surprising commonality of interest across the board.

In summary, our limited data on local transportation and protective service problem awareness show a few differences among farm residents, open country-nonfarm and small- and large-city residents. By and large, however, the differences occurred only when the question itself pointed to a distinctively rural problem. The general picture is one of similarity of interests among rural and urban residents. Rural and urban interests are intertwined. Local and statewide problems and, presumably, solutions are similar. The precise characteristics of the problem may vary. Replacing a rural bridge or maintaining a rarely-used or over-used rural road are not quite the same as, say, widening a city street. But Illinois residents' concern about local transportation and protective service problems do not seem to differ much according to where they live. The particular problems may be local, but the concerns are general. On the other hand, the concerns may not be intense. Generally speaking, the pattern of responses in Table 5 suggests that only minorities—or weak majorities—of respondents felt that there were "medium" or "serious" problems of the kinds listed in their own communities. The pattern of responses does not suggest the existence of a groundswell of public opinon for major changes in the years ahead.

The Needs of Local Youth

One of the relatively long-term problems of the rural community is the continued tendency for young people to leave the home community and migrate to metropolitan areas (Zuiches and Brown, 1978:69). Rural and other nonmetropolitan areas have been gaining population at the expense of the metropolis in recent years, as we

mentioned earlier. Migration from the city to the countryside, and vice versa, involves people of all ages, of course, but at present it is only in the twenty-to-twenty-four-year age group that metropolitan areas continue to show a net gain in population.

The results of our survey of Illinois residents clearly reflect the differential impact of migration of younger ages (see Table 6). Only 22 percent of metropolitan area residents indicated that "young people leaving the community" was a medium or serious problem in their communities. But the percentages increase across the columns of the table, and fully 48 percent of farm residents view the out-migration of youth as problematic.

It is of some interest to note that the questions of job opportunities elicited very similar response patterns across the several residential categories. Over half the respondents in each of the residential categories viewed job opportunities as problematic in their local communities, with farm residents slightly less likely than others to perceive a problem of this kind. Responses to the question on unemployment, as distinct from a lack of job opportunities, show a somewhat more marked tendency for urban residents, including those in small towns, to single this out as a problem (see Table 6). Farm residents are considerably less likely than respondents in any other residential category to view unemployment as problematic. The point of interest is that it is apparently not a lack of local job opportunities that leads to concern about youth leaving the area. Jobs are a matter of general concern, least salient for the most rural segment, the farm population. But concern over the out-migration of youth is strongest in rural areas, where unemployment is viewed as least problematic.

One must focus on the type of job opportunities in an area, not concern over job opportunities as such, to understand the continued out-migration of young people from rural areas and expressed con-

TABLE 6

NEEDS OF LOCAL YOUTH AS PERCEIVED BY ADULTS: JOBS AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Respondents who say that, in *their communities,* there is a "medium" or "serious" problem involving the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Job opportunities for youth	58	61	61	54
Job opportunities for people 18-60 years of age	53	60	62	50
Unemployment	51	54	49	39
Young people leaving the community	22	37	39	48
Recreational opportunities for young people	48	58	61	53
Distance from state parks and recreation areas	27	22	22	20
Alcohol abuse among teenagers	69	71	66	72
Drug abuse among teenagers	76	77	72	71

cern about that out-migration. The familiar phenonomen of going away to school is of course associated with at least temporary out-migration from rural areas at young ages. There is more to the phenomenon, however. When migration streams between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are characterized in terms of occupation, one notes that nonmetropolitan areas show a net loss only in the top job category, the professional and managerial occupations (Zuiches and Brown, 1978:70). This is not to say that all rural young people who move to the cities are in top jobs. There are exchanges between city and countryside at all levels, but the balance sheet favors the city only in the professional and managerial occupations. Rural communities are thus continuing to experience a net loss of some of their most highly qualified young people. Put differently, rural families and rural communities are making a net contribution to the larger society by exporting an attractive commodity, well-trained young people. This is an old problem still unsolved.

Returning to Table 6, responses to the several questions on recreational opportunities and teenage problems were included here primarily to support the themes already introduced into the discussion. Residents of nonmetropolitan areas are somewhat more likely to view recreational opportunities for youth as problematic, but the differences are not great. Closeness to state parks and recreation areas is almost by definition less likely to be perceived as a problem by nonmetropolitan residents because they live where most of the facilities are. Even metropolitan residents do not seem to be too concerned about access to state parks; thus the pattern across residential categories is one of similarity. Recreational opportunities are to some degree problematic to people everywhere, not just those in rural or urban areas. (On the other hand, a substantially higher proportion of metropolitan than farm residents would favor more land being allocated to parks, as we have noted in the land use section of this report).

It has of course been recognized for some time that far more than recreational opportunities or their absence is involved in keeping young people down on the farm. Similarly, if the city has traditionally been viewed as a "sinful" place, there is little in the response to the questions on teenage problems to suggest that residents of Illinois rural communities see their own settings as less sinful than do city dwellers in the late 1970s. Concern about teenagers is a general phenomenon, not unique to any one type of community.

In summary, responses from the statewide sample of Illinois residents to several questions pertaining to youth result in a pattern of similarity across residential categories, with the single exception of concern over out-migration of youth. Rural residents are considerably more likely to view youth out-migration as problematic, and other data cited in the text document that this concern has a basis in fact. Rural communities are continuing to lose young people to the metropolitan areas, and they are in fact losing a disproportionate fraction of their most highly trained youth. Rural and urban interests, and rural and urban communities, have become less sharply differentiated over the years. The rural community continues to be an exporter of highly trained young people, nevertheless, and the rural community of the future will be the poorer for it. Perhaps, as business and industry continue to move away from the centers of the big cities, the tendency for young people to seek opportunity in the

metropolis will diminish. Some differentials are likely to continue to be evident, however, as we will note in a later section on perceived needs for health professionals in rural versus urban communities.

Local School Issues

The topic of local schools is of course closely allied to the more general topic of the younger generation. In the previous section we at least implied that local educational systems, and their linkage with supra-local systems, contribute to an export situation with respect to some rural youth. The major purpose of local schools is to prepare young people for a productive life in the local community, however, and the function of the local school as a community integrating and community defining institution goes much beyond its overt, educational purpose. (For a recent, and excellent, Illinois study on this topic, see Peshkin, 1978.) Local schools, both rural and urban, more than almost any other local institution, have provided a focal point for common interests, a context within which an assortment of more particularistic interests and networks of relationships intersect. What one might call the "sense of community" is very hard to define, and we will not attempt a definition here, but it finds its clearest expression in the context of the local school, including, and rather prominently, the extra-curricular activities of the school.

Rural schools, as we mentioned earlier, have been transformed in recent decades. The process of amalgamating small, local entities into larger aggregates which has characterized many aspects of the rural community is perhaps more visible with respect to the school than for other institutions in that the decisions to take certain actions have been made in the public sector. In any case, rural schools have been transformed, and in the process rural communities have been reshaped to some extent.

The organization and reorganization of local school systems seems to be a never-ending process, but in the sense of consolidating smaller units into larger systems the change process is probably at a plateau at present. This is reflected in the responses to a series of questions about local schools, as shown in Table 7. Farm residents, and indeed all nonmetropolitan residents, are less likely than respondents in metropolitan areas to indicate that they view school programs as problematic in their communities. The same general pattern emerges for all levels of the school system, from the elementary level through adult programs. It can be assumed that residents of rural communities have adapted to the changes which have taken place and are relatively satisfied with the school systems now in place.

Metropolitan area residents are more likely than others to express concern about local schools, especially with respect to the elementary and secondary levels, as shown in Table 7. We have no direct evidence as to why this should be the case, but it seems likely that such issues as the busing of students to achieve racial balance may underlie the tendency for metropolitan area residents to indicate that they have local school problems. Except in isolated instances, rural residents have not had to face the integration issue.

Another type of issue which is currently of greater concern in urban than in rural areas is the set of problems involved with continued shifts of population to the suburbs, plus recent declines in the birth rate. Many areas of concentrated population are faced with demand for new school facilities in one local area and an embarrass-

ing lack of demand for available school space in one or more other, often nearby areas. The incidence of this type of problem is particularly high in the so-called "collar counties" around the city of Chicago. Such problems can generate a great deal of local sentiment. The urban neighborhood is in many respects similar to the rural community we have been attempting to depict, and the neighborhood school is not easily given up. Such issues undoubtedly underlie some of the metro area residents' tendencies to view local school matters as problematic. Alternatively, it may also be the case that rural people take more of a proprietary interest in their schools, feel more of a sense of "ownership," and are correspondingly less inclined to be critical of "their" schools. Whether the relative satisfaction with schools among nonmetropolitan residents reflected in Table 7 is justified or not we have no basis for knowing. The pattern of responses in Table 7 indicates only that concern about schools runs higher in metropolitan areas.

Rural communities are not entirely immune from the continuing effects of population shifts on local school systems. Though we mentioned earlier that school consolidation, as such, seems to have plateaued as a local issue at the present, this is more true for some areas than others. There is some concern in Illinois at present that certain local school systems are too small to permit offering the kinds of educational programs deemed desirable by today's standards. School standards continue to be upgraded, of course, and some rural communities, as presently constituted, lack the population base to support what are considered to be adequate programs.

Survey respondents were asked whether they agreed that "the state should establish a minimum number of students in order to have a separate school district." The percentages agreeing with that statement are shown in Table 7, as well as the percentages of respondents who had no opinion. The "no opinion" category is included here because a relatively high proportion of all respondents

TABLE 7

LOCAL SCHOOL AND ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM ISSUES

Respondents who say that, in *their communities,* there is a "medium" or "serious" problem involving the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Quality of elementary school programs	41	28	30	30
Quality of junior high and high school programs	41	30	32	31
Enough vocational and technical education programs	35	28	33	24
Educational opportunities for adults	22	18	24	18
Libraries and book services	18	13	16	9
Respondents who agree *that the state should establish a minimum number of students to establish or maintain a separate school district*	37	33	27	19
No opinion	31	30	29	20

had no opinion on the topic, and thus it would have been misleading to report only agreement or lack of agreement. In addition, however, the differences in percentages in the "no opinion" row indicate that the issue of minimum student numbers for maintenance of a local district is more salient in rural than in urban areas. Farm residents are least likely to indicate that they have no opinion on the question and, correspondingly, are least likely to agree that establishing minimum enrollment standards for a local district would be desirable.

The less densely settled the area, the less likely it is that a local respondent will favor enrollment minimums. Statewide school issues are not necessarily decided on the basis of the views of the relatively small farm population, however. Should minimum enrollment standards for the maintenance of a seperate district be set at some time in the future, the rural communities of the state will be most strongly affected. The process of amalgamation, not just of school districts but of rural communities themselves, may be carried one step farther as Illinois moves into the 1980s.

In summary, concern about the quality and availability of educational programs, as reflected in the responses of Illinois residents, is more prominent in metropolitan than nonmetropolitan areas at this time. Respondents residing in rural communities seem to be relatively satisfied with their local schools. Rural residents have not, by and large, had to cope with questions of racial balance in schools, nor are they under pressure to close redundant schools in old neighborhoods in favor of new schools in growth areas. Further consolidation of entire systems may become an issue in the future, however, and thinly populated rural areas may have to make further adjustments in their institutional arrangements to meet changing state school standards. If, as we argue, the local school is a critical element in the shaping of a community, some rural communities may well be substantially weakened in the years ahead. Return migration to the countryside may offset pressures to consolidate schools further, but probably not in the major farming areas. Thus far, the return migration has been most prominent in so-called "amenity rich" areas, which are hilly and forested, thus least favorable to intensive cultivation. Farm residents are therefore likely to be more substantially affected by changing school district boundaries than the rural population as a whole.

Health Care and Medical Services

Medical service delivery systems are among the many rural community subsystems involved in the general change process which we have been characterizing as an aggregation of small units into larger entities. Acceptance of changes in the health area, or satisfactory adjustments to the changes which have been made, is not apparent in at least some of the responses to medical service questions in our survey of Illinois residents, however.

Rural areas in Illinois, as elsewhere in the country as a whole, have to a substantial degree lost direct, local access to health professionals. The stereotype of the "country doctor" may still be personified by medical practitioners in some rural communities, but in general the stereotype is invoked only in nostalgic commentary. This situation is reflected in Table 8, which shows that 53 percent of both open country nonfarm and farm respondents feel that they have a "medium" or "serious" problem in their communities in that there are not enough doctors or dentists available. Urban residents, particu-

larly those in metropolitan areas, are substantially less likely to see access to medical professionals as problematic.

Concern about access to health services among rural residents is less evident in the responses to the other questions shown in the table, however. Only one-fourth to one-third of our rural respondents voiced concern about availability of hospitals and clinics, access to emergency treatment, and availability of ambulance service. Moreover, the proportions of rural residents expressing concern in response to these questions are only moderately higher than the proportions shown for urban respondents.

One can infer that people living in Illinois rural communities have substantially accepted, and made adjustments to, the centralization of specialized medical facilities which has taken place in recent decades. Health care standards have increased, sophisticated equipment cannot be justified on a purely local basis in rural areas, and there seems to be acceptance of a tradeoff between greater distance to facilities and perceived higher quality of those facilities. Conversely, however, farm residents and other country dwellers do not seem to have adjusted to difficulty of access to health care of a more routine kind. A majority of rural respondents view direct and local access to health care professionals as problematic. The important point here is that most people, rural or urban, probably view "health care" as first and foremost a matter of access to a local practitioner, as "getting to a doctor." Availability of hospitals and so on is not unimportant, but is an issue of considerably less salience than direct access to physicians and dentists. From that perspective it can be argued that health care issues represent a serious challenge to the rural communities of tomorrow.

A final question, concerning availability of mental health and family counseling services, received responses which suggest that few Illinois residents, rural or urban, are sensitive to problems in this area of health care delivery. Only 22 percent of farm respondents, somewhat less than in any of the other residential categories, marked the "medium" or "serious" problem categories in response to this question. Since both mental health and family counseling services are relatively new as separately identifiable aspects of general health care, the issue of centralization of facilities and adjustment to such centralization by people in rural communities does not arise.

It could be argued that people generally, and perhaps rural people in particular, are not yet sensitive to either needs or available services in the mental health area. If people see no need for a service they are unlikely to express concern about its lack of availability. On the other hand, there may be some contradiction between lack of concern about mental health and counseling services and the strong concern about access to local health practitioners our rural respondents expressed. Perhaps it is precisely the more subtle counseling role of the stereotypical country doctor that is most missed by contemporary rural residents. Whether a specialized service delivery system, even if locally available, can effectively replace the often informal guidance and counsel of a local health professional is an open question.

To summarize, our survey data suggest that residents of rural communities, much like urbanites, are not greatly concerned about the more technical aspects of local health care services. They seem to be relatively satisfied with facilities available to them. Rural residents

express considerable concern about local availability of doctors and dentists, however. There is evidence here of an enduring problem for rural communities. Medical school enrollments are at an all-time high, and there is even concern in some sectors about a possible surfeit of medical practitioners (*Science,* 1979). Newly trained health practitioners generally do not set up their practices in thinly populated areas, however, and assorted efforts to encourage them to do so have not been markedly successful. The rural community of the 1980s and beyond will have to continue to seek solutions to this problem.

Needs of the Elderly

What is defined as a "need" depends very much on the point of view, the general value system, of the person making the declaration. In this section on possible needs of elderly persons some differences in the perspectives of rural and urban residents are very much in evidence. Objectively, nonmetropolitan areas have had a higher proportion of middle-aged and older people then metropolitan areas for many years. This is reflected in our representative sample in which 22 percent of the farm residents were aged 65 or older, versus 15 percent for metropolitan residents, with the other two residential categories in between. The relatively higher proportion of people in the older age groups is also increasing at a more rapid rate in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas at the present time (Zuiches and Brown, 1978: 59-60). Subjectively, however, responses from our survey of Illinois residents indicate that meeting the needs of elderly persons is perceived as less rather than more problematic by nonmetropolitan as compared with metropolitan respondents (see Table 9).

It is entirely possible that some of the needs of older persons are more adequately met in Illinois rural communities than in the cities. Our survey questions were designed to pinpoint some "need" areas currently in the public eye, which by general societal definition are not being met adequately. Housing for the elderly, nursing home standards, and community services which would permit elderly persons to continue to live in their homes rather than in specialized facilities are all matters of general concern. This concern is clearly

TABLE 8

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Proportion of respondents who say that, in *their communities,* there is a "medium" or "serious" problem involving the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Sufficient number of doctors and dentists	29	41	53	53
Availability of hospitals and clinics	20	23	31	25
Ambulance service	19	23	30	27
Access to emergency medical treatment	26	30	39	33
Mental health and family counseling services	29	25	27	22

shared by rural community respondents, as is indicated by the substantial majorities favoring public expenditures for home care types of services for the elderly, shown in Table 9. Rural areas are not noted for the provision of such services, however, and of interest is the fact that rural respondents are somewhat less likely to favor tax support for such services than those living in the cities. On all of the questions, farm residents are least likely to perceive a problem and to favor service support via tax expenditure, open country and small town residents are intermediate, and metropolitan area residents are most likely to do both of these things.

Though the differences in percentages between residential categories shown in the table are not great, the most plausible explanation for the differences which do exist is that rural residents do not yet expect their local communities to provide the range of services that the dominant urban majority has come to expect. The difference is then a matter of degree, not a difference in kind. Furthermore, to say that rural residents do "not yet" expect as high a level of community services as urbanites is to imply that urban and rural perspectives will ultimately converge.

Data at one point in time do not provide a basis for predicting future events. We are willing to assume, however, that the rural community of the future will increase its emphasis on services to the elderly segment of its population for several reasons. Current trends in the age distribution and in life expectancy for the American population as a whole make it clear that the elderly segment of our population will become more, rather than less, prominent in the years ahead. It is likely that nonmetropolitan areas will continue to experience increases in population at older age levels at a more rapid rate than the big cities in at least the short-run future. Migrants from the city to the countryside, who are affecting many aspects of the rural community, include a quite substantial, though not dominant, segment of older persons (Sofranko and Williams, 1978). The very fact that a strong majority of our rural community respondents currently favor expenditure of public resources for services directed to the elderly indicates that acceptance of community responsibility for such services has already largely taken place. We do not know what attitudes toward services for the elderly were like in the past. It is not likely, however, that a similar survey taken a generation ago would have shown strong support for public sector funding of special services for the elderly (a point to which we will return in the following section on welfare services). We infer from our data that the rural community is changing in its perspective on the needs of elderly persons and that it is basically responding to need definitions extant in the larger society.

In summary, we infer from our survey data that rural communities in Illinois may be under some pressure to direct more public attention to services for the elderly. Respondents living in rural communities were considerably less likely than urbanites to indicate that their communities were experiencing problems in providing housing or good nursing homes for the elderly. Majorities of rural respondents favored tax support for services to the elderly, but the urban majorities were even greater. With relatively high and growing proportions of elderly persons living in nonmetropolitan areas of the state, it seems likely that the rural community of the future will place greater emphasis on the needs of older persons. Further, if

farms do not "stay in the family," and recent trends seem to indicate that this is the pattern of the present and future, it is likely that the tradition of familial responsibility for the elderly will be shifted increasingly to some other entity at the community or extra-local level. Some rural communities are in fact becoming retirement communities, not just for the retired farmer but the former urbanite as well. To what extent such a trend will continue and to what extent any such trend will affect many Illinois rural communities remains to be seen. Further change for the rural community is likely, in our view.

Attitudes About Welfare Issues

In the previous section we argued that rural residents are not as prone as urbanites to view any special needs of elderly persons as matters for community concern. The same kind of rural-urban difference is evident in sample respondents' attitudes on welfare issues, and it is considerably more pronounced than was the case in the previous section. Table 10 shows the proportions of respondents in each residence category who indicate willingness to see tax money spent for low-income individual and family needs for housing, help with heating bills, daycare centers for working parents, and financial help to pay for abortions. The latter is the most controversial in that abortions as such are controversial, and the use of public funds for such a purpose simply adds another element of controversy to an already complex issue. It is not surprising then that relatively few respondents in any residential category would favor tax support to provide abortions for women who cannot afford private care, as shown in the table.

The results in Table 10 make the interesting point that regardless of the general level of support for any of the low-income programs about which questions were asked in the survey, farm residents are least likely to favor the program. On two of the four questions the pattern of responses is such that support drops off across the table from the metropolitan to farm categories. On the other two ques-

TABLE 9

NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY

Respondents who say that, in *their communities,* there is a "medium" or "serious" problem involving the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Housing for senior citizens	49	43	42	30
Quality of nursing home care	42	32	33	24
Respondents who say they are willing to see tax money spent for the following:				
Nursing care in older people's homes, rather than in hospitals or nursing homes	81	78	78	76
Homemaker services for older and disabled people	87	84	83	75
Legal assistance for the elderly	90	88	87	78

tions the differences in support among respondents in different residential categories are minor except for the sharply lower support expressed by farm residents. In general, there seem to be distinct differences between rural and urban perspectives on welfare issues, and whether such differences will ultimately be resolved is far from clear. It is possible to take a fairly deterministic stance and argue that ultimately societal perspectives will prevail and differences among subgroups in a society will diminish. That type of argument is appealing if some general societal perspective is reasonably apparent, but it is not clear that any such consensus exists on welfare issues in American society at present.

Objectively, there is no question but that rural areas have more than their share of low-income residents, even when differences in living costs are taken into account. Median family income currently is lower in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas (Zuiches and Brown, 1978:58). The same pattern which has existed historically persists, although some gains have been made to diminish the gap. Just as with respect to disproportions of older persons in nonmetropolitan areas, however, the objective situation is not necessarily reflected in local definitions of problem situations. Rural, and especially farm respondents, are less likely than city dwellers to accept public responsibility for solving the problems of low-income people.

Subjectively, it is possible to speculate that rural people have historically viewed public responsibility for the problems of poverty as an urban phenomenon. It is probably true that up to about the middle of the present century there have been marked differences between rural and urban people in their definitions of what was considered necessary for living, and thus their definitions of poverty. Rural plumbing standards, home furnishing standards, home heating standards, and so on, did lag behind urban standards. But such standards have also been radically transformed in a remarkably short period of time. One of the more visible aspects of the general blurring of rural-urban differences we have been discussing here is precisely the matter of standards of living. That which people define as desirable and/or necessary in material terms is largely a matter of general societal definition at this point; it does not hinge on rural

TABLE 10

WELFARE ISSUES

Proportion of respondents who say they are willing to see tax money spent for the following:	Residential category			
	Metropolitan area	Smaller town and city	Open country-nonfarm	farm
	(percent)			
Public housing for low income families	54	57	56	42
Help with heating bills for low income people	60	61	63	47
Daycare centers for low income working parents	71	68	64	46
Abortions for women who cannot afford private care	42	33	30	21

versus urban residence as it has tended to in the past. Some differences do seem to persist, however, in people's perceptions of public versus private responsibility for the have-nots. Our data show that farm residents, especially, are less likely than urbanites to view low-income problems as a public, community responsibility, at least in the sense of being willing to see tax money spent on welfare programs.

Arguing from an urban perspective, it may not be inaccurate to say that the farm segment of the rural community has exported to the city poverty problems as well as some of its more positive elements. Whether by intent or not, publically condoned and supported trends in the agricultural industry in recent decades have brought about redundancy and subsequent out-migration of a substantial fraction of the agricultural labor force. Large scale and capital intensive agriculture means lower demand for labor and a very difficult competitive situation for the small-scale entrepreneur. The result has been an export of people, including many with few resources at their disposal. Speculation on the latter theme here is a key to a better understanding of perspectives on poverty problems in the rural community of today. To the extent that the poorest segment of the rural population has been exported to the city, one can understand why residents of rural communities today would tend to continue to view poverty as an urban problem and, by inference, an urban responsibility. In any case, our survey results show that views of farm residents in Illinois, and to a lesser extent nonmetropolitan residents generally, are different from metropolitan area residents on welfare issues.

In summary, responses from our sample of Illinois residents to four questions concerning the problems of low-income people show that farm residents, in particular, deviate from a general pattern of at least nominal acceptance of public responsibility for the poor. Whether this is a current expression of an enduring, traditional emphasis on self-reliance which still affects people's perspectives on poverty problems in rural areas we do not know. And whether a more objective assessment of very real rural poverty problems will lead to change in local attitudes is not known either. To the extent that statewide programs can better the lot of the rural poor, the lack of support from a minority farm population may not be of great consequence. Conversely, to the extent that the local community is expected to solve problems, lack of support from the relatively small but economically significant farm segment can make a great deal of difference in extending or denying community services to the poor. We conclude that the rural community of the future may be under some pressure to recognize its public responsibility in coping with low-income problems. The major imponderable, in our view, is whether or not a societal consensus actually exists on the problem of poverty.

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding report we have provided information on the attitudes of farm residents and other respondents on a number of issues which affect the social environment in which the future of Illinois agriculture will unfold. In the report we have dealt with land use, governmental actions, and several aspects of the character of the rural community.

As a result of changes in society, rural people and farmers in particular now form a numerical minority in the United States and in the state of Illinois. As a minor segment of the population, farmers in Illinois will continue to find themselves more and more in a position of practicing their occupation in an urbanized surrounding. The data in this report indicate that for most issues farmers are not very different in attitude from their nonfarming fellow citizens. Admittedly, farmers' attitudes are shaped by what they perceive to be in their self-interest and the interest of their families. On occasion such self-interest is in conflict with the interests of other segments of society. Farmers are interested in high commodity prices; consumers are interested in an inexpensive and dependable food supply. Farmers do not want to carry a disproportionate tax burden and thus favor certain types of taxes. Farmers support certain programs in their communities over others and may on occasion set priorities somewhat different from those of urban or rural nonfarm residents. However, we interpret the data as showing that farmers have made the transition to an urbanized society very well, that they can in no way be considered to be "out of tune" with the dominant sentiment of society. The farmers should continue to play an active role in the state's social and political life. While the proportion of farmers in the society as a whole has been reduced, their points of view appear close enough to the mainstream of society that there need be little anxiety that their shrinking proportion might cause an exclusion of the farmer's point of view from the public arena.

Future developments and trends may, of course, change the attitudes and perceptions reported here. Assuming a continuation of current trends in agriculture, or a situation of high prices and high production, it is likely that a further convergence of attitudes between the farm respondents and the other respondents will take place, even though on certain items the divergent interests of farmers and nonfarmers may become more sharply focused. Especially in the realm of economically-based issues such as food prices, land values, and real estate taxes, farmers and nonfarmers may express attitudes strongly influenced by their opposing economic interests. If agriculture should go through a period of stagnation in the next decade or two, the resulting impact on farmer attitudes would be substantial although difficult to predict. If agriculture should fall behind the rest of society economically, the resulting sense of relative deprivation could lead to behaviors and attitudes which deviate relative to those held by the mainstream of society. The American Agriculture Movement most recently, and also many other farmer protest movements in earlier times, provide illustrations of a future that may develop if farmers fail to share equitably in the national economy. It is impossible to anticipate the nature of the farmer protest in the hypothetical case of continuing low levels of income; historical precedent points out, however, that some kind of protest is probable.

Finally, it may be useful to remember that opinion and attitude measurements should not be considered equivalent to political votes for or against certain measures or attempts to solve problems. Data as reported in this paper typically place an item in isolation, and the respondent deals with the issue in this singular fashion. Political decision making is the art of compromise and always deals with issues in the context of other concerns. Different population groups and their interests must be reconciled in any particular political decision. But

equally important, various complex and frequently conflicting aspects of one issue must be dealt with. An example may help to explain the difference between single-issue attitudes and multifaceted political decision making. Our discussion of government regulation considered the strong shared support among farmers and nonfarmers for restricting land ownership by foreigners. However, translating this sentiment into political action may not be simple. There are political and economic interests—fear of retaliation by foreigners, for example—which must be taken into account. In addition, the current system of land ownership registration in Illinois frequently makes it difficult to determine who the owner of a given property is. Implementing restrictive legislation on foreign ownership will likely also affect our current practices of ownership identification, or the lack of it. As a result, the strong support for restricting foreign ownership may not be easily translated into an effective legislative program.

The expression of attitudes and political decision making are thus not identical. At the same time persistent attitudes do have an influence on our behavior—including legislative behavior. Knowing and interpreting the attitudes of farmers and nonfarmers will add one more element to the decision making process that helps shape our future.

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